



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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COUNCIL RACHETS UP RECYCLING EFFORTS BY BANNING DISPOSAL OF RECYCLABLES AS TRASH AT COUNTY REFUSE FACILITIES

The County Council today approved an update to the County's Solid Waste Management plan that would ban trash haulers from disposing of recyclable materials as trash at County garbage facilities.

Waste collectors would need to keep recyclables separate and would be turned away from County facilities if their trash contained significant materials that could be recycled – including bottles and cans, newspapers, mixed paper, and corrugated cardboard.

"This is part of a multi-pronged strategy to boost recycling in the County," said Councilmember Steve Silverman, who initiated the proposal to ban corrugated cardboard last year. "Last year, we inaugurated our program of recycling cardboard, began distributing rolling blue 'tote' carts to all single-family home households, and kicked off a campaign to work closely with the commercial sector.

"Bans on recyclables such as this have worked in other communities," said Council President Tom Perez, lead member on the Environment. "Our Office of Legislative Oversight estimates it could divert 125,000 tons of material annually – materials that ought to be recycled."

"This action alone -- if corrugated cardboard and mixed paper were recycled at an 85 percent rate -- could boost our County's recycling rate from 38 percent to 47 percent, close to our 50 percent recycling goal," said Silverman.

"While government works on encouraging recycling, we all have to work on our environmental stewardship by reducing our amount of household waste," added Perez.

The ban on disposal of recyclables as trash by trash haulers would go into effect immediately, but fines will not be levied for one year as the County educates haulers on the new regulations.

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